

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS!

Public gardens flourish with Greensboro Beautiful

By SUSAN SHINN

Special to the News & Record

Greensboro Beautiful has helped put gorgeous gardens within the public's reach since the nonprofit was launched 40 years ago.

Thanks to a unique partnership, the organization and local government have worked together to make the city more inviting to residents and visitors.

Perhaps the most visible contribution of this pairing has been the formation of three public gardens: the Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden, the Greensboro Arboretum and the Bog Garden.

"What's very unusual is that the partnership is with public gardens," says Kathy Cates, director of City Beautiful, the division of the Parks & Recreation Department that works closely with Greensboro Beautiful.

Cates says it's a luxury to have private funding used for these public projects.

Through the Parks & Recreation Department the city has acquired more than 3,500 acres and developed more than 170 facilities in 75 years.

The mission of Greensboro Beautiful, Cates says, is "to conserve and enhance the beauty and ecology of our community through public and private cooperation."

Greensboro Beautiful is a totally volunteer nonprofit organization. City Beautiful manages its day-to-day operations, providing administration, fundraising, programming, volunteer coordination, marketing and promotions.

In 2007, Greensboro Beautiful contributed 12,343 hours of service through 3,000 volunteers. It generated around \$1.3 million through cash contributions, in-kind services, volunteer hours and cost management.

These figures are required by Keep America Beautiful, of which Greensboro Beautiful is an affiliate, according to Cates. But over the years, Greensboro Beautiful has broadened its goals to encompass much more than litter cleanup.

Key areas of focus include the public gardens, urban forestry, a clean community and community landscaping.

There are more than 100 beautification sites throughout the city. Greensboro Beautiful provides grants from \$250 to \$1,000 to neighborhood groups to help them accomplish their objectives.

The most exciting project of this partnership is the formation of Gateway Gardens, the city's fourth public garden.



NANCY SIDELINGER/Special Sections Photographer

Among Greensboro Beautiful's most visible contributions have been the formation of three public gardens: the Tanger Family Bicentennial Garden, the Greensboro Arboretum (pictured) and the Bog Garden.

The new facility, to be built on 11 acres at the corner of East Lee and Florida streets, will include a children's garden, heritage garden, rain garden, wedding garden, Japanese garden and white oak garden.

Greensboro Beautiful has raised \$4.7 million — through city bonds, private donations and grants — of the \$5 million goal for the capital campaign. "We hope funding will remain stable and allow us to continue the work we're doing," Cates says.

The first phase is expected to cost \$3 million, and the additional money will be used to continue funding of the master plan. They hope to start construction early in 2009 and open the first phase to the public later in the year. The first phase includes the main entrance, parking, children's garden, rain garden, heritage garden, walking trails and public artwork. Admission will be free, and the facility will be open to the public sunrise to sunset.

Organizers are eager for the project, which has been in the works since 1999, to take shape. "It's going to be gorgeous," Cates says enthusiastically.



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Construction on the city's fourth public garden project, Gateway Gardens, is expected to begin early this year.